

WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Wednesday, May 31, 2017, with School Board Representative Lupi Grady.

Mayor Jordan started the meeting at 7:30 p.m. The meeting was held in Room 201 of the Greenbelt Community Center.

PRESENT WERE: Councilmembers Judith F. Davis, Konrad E. Herling, Leta M. Mach, Silke I. Pope, Edward V. J. Putens, Rodney M. Roberts and Mayor Emmett V. Jordan.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Nicole Ard, City Manager; and Cindy Murray, City Clerk.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Lupi Grady, Prince George's County School Board Representative; Ed Ryans, Elizabeth Chaisson, Shayla Taylor, David Hill, Jr. and Sameano Porchea, Prince George's County Public Schools; Melinda Brady, Greenbelt Advisory Committee on Education; Kathleen Gallagher, Greenbelt News Review; Reverend Ray Raysor, Anne Wallace, Jerome Dancis, Adeline Wilcox, Dave Grogan, Bill Orleans, David Talbird, Darlene Jean-Pierre, Lina Trullinger, Thurston Livingston, Jennifer Livingston and Robert Anthony.

Ms. Grady provided an update on the Prince George's County Board of Education (BoE), including the Equity Task Force, Workforce Diversity Task Force and Academic Achievement Committee. She said a 20 minute minimum/30 minute maximum recess will be implemented next school year. Ms. Grady spoke about health and nutrition programs in the schools. Mayor Jordan and Ms. Davis mentioned the city's participation in the Let's Move Cities and Towns and Health Eating Active Living programs and suggested Ms. Grady contact Julie McHale, Recreation Director, for possible coordination of the initiatives with the schools. Ms. Pope said Ms. Kohout at Springhill Lake Elementary School was integrating health living programs and activities in the school and suggested Ms. Grady contact her also.

In response to a question from Mayor Jordan, Ms. Grady said the County Council approved its budget last Thursday and the BoE was expecting a recommendation from Dr. Maxwell and his budget team by next week. She said the BoE will then review the recommendations. Ms. Grady said she is aware that actions to engage parents and students earlier in the college preparation process is included as a budget recommendation. Mr. Ryans explained school based budgeting. Ms. Davis said she had read in County Council Member Glaros' budget message that some funding had been set aside for school improvements. Ms. Grady said she hopes her BoE colleagues will consider making improvements to school bus lots and facilities, many of which are in very poor condition.

Mayor Jordan thanked Ms. Grady for her advocacy regarding the city's opposition to the recent Milestone Communications proposal for a cell phone tower at Eleanor Roosevelt High School (ERHS). Ms. Davis reported that Greenbelt Middle School (GMS) was another potential cell phone tower site. Ms. Grady said she would check. Mr. Roberts suggested all 71 potential school board sites for cell towers be reconsidered. Ms. Grady noted that Prince George's County Public Schools (PGCPS) has a contract in place with Milestone Communication and it had been renewed by CEO Maxwell.

Mayor Jordan said children residing in the new Greenbelt Station neighborhood are currently assigned to Berwyn Heights Elementary, Greenbelt Middle School and Parkdale High School. He expressed Council's concern about the situation and its belief that all children residing in the

city should attend city schools. Mayor Jordan mentioned the money the city invests in schools through the Advisory Committee on Education grants to educators program, awards for outstanding educators and students, funding of after-school Science and Reading clubs and funding a Student Resource Officer. He said the students attending non-city schools do not receive these benefits.

Ms. Mach said that years ago, Prince George's County Council had agreed that all Greenbelt students would always attend Greenbelt schools. She said the School Boundary Office was not aware of this agreement and had made a mistake when establishing school boundaries for Greenbelt Station. She stated that the mistake needs to now be corrected.

Ms. Chaisson explained that PGCPSS is a county school system and not a municipal based school system. Dr. Porchea said she couldn't speak as to the history but could speak about the situation as of now. She said she had reviewed the student enrollment numbers for ERHS and in order to provide space for all Greenbelt high school students to attend the school, a programming change would have to be made. Dr. Porchea said the Science and Technology Program at ERHS accommodates 900 county students and only 70 of these students are residents of Greenbelt. She said one option that may be considered in the future is moving the Science and Technology Program out of ERHS (to DuVal high School) to open up space for city students. Dr. Porchea added that PGCPSS is in the process of contracting for a study of all schools in the northern part of the county and the study will include a look at school boundaries.

Council expressed its opposition to moving the Science and Technology Program out of ERHS. Ms. Davis mentioned a large number of students attending ERHS use an address in the city to attend the school but actually live in Washington D.C. and other areas outside the city. She added that a large number of students from Lanham are currently enrolled at ERHS and they could be reassignment to Duval High School which has a below capacity enrollment.

Thurston Livingston, Nina Trellinger, David Talbird and other residents of Greenbelt Station noted their support for Greenbelt Station students attending city schools. They spoke about the importance of students attending schools in their community.

Ms. Grady said she would discuss the situation with staff and BoE members. Dr. Porchea said she would also relook and examine all possible options. Ms. Chaisson said a policy that all students residing in municipalities being assigned to schools in the municipalities would have to be a policy change implemented by the BoE. Ms. Mach emphasizes that the situation was caused by a mistake and the mistake needs to be corrected.

Ms. Pope reported that Springhill Lake Elementary School functioned well but was very overcrowded. She said the building is in very poor condition with structural damage and heating and air conditioning problems in many classrooms. Ms. Pope said the temporary classrooms are in similar condition with gutters falling off and roof leaks. She added that there is no personnel to clean the school. Ms. Chaisson said because of huge operational cuts years ago, only essential maintenance (band aiding) is being done in the schools. Ms. Taylor said the Capital Improvement Program calls for Springhill Lake Elementary to be replaced in FY 2020 but noted that the CIP often doesn't get completely funded each year. Mr. Hill said Springhill Lake Elementary was #10 out of 25 schools up for replacement. Mr. Ryan said he would meet with Facility Operations personnel tomorrow to discuss the problems.

In response to a question from Ms. Davis, Mr. Hill and Ms. Taylor said Facility Operations and Building Services personnel work very hard but they don't have adequate staff or funding.

Mr. Hill reviewed Capital Projects recently completed as well as planned projects for Greenbelt area schools. There was discussion regarding artificial turf fields and lights planned for Eleanor Roosevelt High School in summer 2018.

Ms. Davis said the Recreation Department has been trying for several years to get a memorandum of understanding in place with PGCPs for use of the GMS fields for city sports teams but had not yet been successful. She also asked about the lights that had originally been proposed for the fields at GMS.

Ms. Davis mentioned concerns relayed to her by parents of Greenbelt Middle School students regarding teachers arriving late, fights in the hallways of the school and locked bathrooms for students after 2:30 p.m. Melinda Brady, Greenbelt Advisory Committee on Education said she had heard similar stories from parents at GMS. However, she stated that she personally (as a parent of a 6th grade student in the TAG program) has been very satisfied with the school. Mr. Ryan said he had met with the GMS principal and they are working to address the problems mentioned.

There was discussion regarding the numbers of teachers on administrative leave. Mr. Ryans said PGCPs takes all allegations received very seriously but acknowledged there was some over reporting. Ms. Pope commented on the disruption to students in the classroom when they lose their permanent classroom teacher for several months. Ms. Grady said there have been meetings with general counsel for PGCPs to discuss ways to address these situations so student instruction is not impacted.

In response to a question from Council, Mr. Hill said PGCPs had been unable to find available land that would support the needs required for the relocation of the Greenbelt Road Bus Lot.

In response to a question from Ms. Davis, Mr. Hill said PGCPs is approximately 50 bus drivers short at this time. He spoke about recent efforts taken to recruit, train and retain bus drivers. Mr. Hill said he expects to be fully staffed prior to the start of the new school year.

Ms. Davis said the city had asked for results of water testing performed in Greenbelt schools. Ms. Chaisson and Mr. Ryans said PGCPs Building Services would have this information.

Mayor Jordan mentioned a problem with school busses speeding in the city. Mr. Hill asked that he be contacted with the bus number when incidents occur.

There was discussion of School Resource Officer funding. Ms. Grady will check and report back.

Informational Items

Ms. Davis suggested a work session with the Prince George's County Library System be scheduled in the future. Ms. Mach suggested the Friends of Greenbelt Library be invited to attend the work session.

The meeting ended at 10:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Cindy Murray
City Clerk*

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